



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOPLIN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO GROWING 100 MARIJUANA PLANTS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Joplin, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to manufacturing 100 or more marijuana plants.

Michael S. Holden, 27, of Joplin, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England this morning.

By pleading guilty, **Holden** admitted that he manufactured 169 marijuana plants on July 6, 2004, in Newton County, Mo.

Law enforcement officers seized a total of 169 marijuana plants from an indoor operation at **Holden's** residence, Graves said. The total amount of marijuana that could have been harvested from the plants was between 10 and 20 kilograms.

Holden was originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Nov. 18, 2004, in Springfield.

Under federal law, Graves explained, **Holden** may be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to 40 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$2 million. His sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly R. Weber Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Newton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Jasper County Drug Task Force and the Southwest Missouri Drug Task Force.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow